WORLD AGRICULTURAL WEATHER HIGHLIGHTS

April 10, 2001

1 - UNITED STATES

Cool, favorably dry weather prevailed in the upper Midwest during March, but warm, rainy conditions in early April aggravated the effects of snowmelt flooding. Farther east, melting snow and heavy precipitation contributed to occasional flooding in southern New England. On the southern Plains and across the South, frequent heavy rain and cool weather slowed fieldwork and winter grain development during March. Cool, dry March weather also slowed winter wheat growth in the eastern Corn Belt, and reduced topsoil moisture availability. Drought-affected Peninsular Florida received beneficial mid- to late-March showers, easing irrigation demands. In California and Arizona, late-March warmth and dryness promoted fieldwork, including initial cotton planting, and rapid crop development. Despite beneficial showers, March precipitation was below normal in most of the Northwest, where summer water-supply concerns continue to mount.

2 - SOUTH AMERICA

Across central Argentina, consistent above- to much-above-normal March rainfall boosted soil moisture for reproductive to filling second-crop soybeans. The abundant moisture also benefited late filling summer crops, but delayed sunflower harvesting and possibly reduced sunflowerseed quality. Near-normal March rainfall eased dryness in northern Argentina, benefiting late-planted cotton. In southern Brazil, near-normal March rainfall favored filling soybeans in the south (Rio Grande do Sul), and caused only brief harvest interruptions in the north (Mato Grosso and Goias). Adequate soil moisture exists for second-crop corn development. Near-normal rainfall also eased dryness across Minas Gerais and western Bahia, but scattered rainfall still prevailed across coastal Bahia and Espirito Santo.

3 - EUROPE

During March and early April, above-normal precipitation in most of western Europe caused flooding and delayed fieldwork, including spring grain planting. In southeastern Europe, showers improved topsoil moisture, but more rain was still needed to end long-term drought. While moderating temperatures caused winter grains to break dormancy in western and southern Europe by the end of March, unseasonably cool weather kept crops dormant in northeastern Europe, where moisture supplies remained adequate and patchy snow cover lingered.

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(More details are available in the Weekly Weather and Crop Bulletin. Subscription information may be obtained by calling (202) 720-7917.)

4 - FSU-WESTERN

In March, above-normal precipitation fell in most areas, further boosting topsoil moisture reserves in Ukraine and southern Russia. In southern areas, above-normal temperatures in early March prompted an earlier-than-usual greening of winter wheat and raised soil temperatures to sufficient levels for early spring grain planting.

5 - NORTHWESTERN AFRICA

In March, well-below-normal precipitation and unseasonably mild weather prevailed throughout the region, stressing winter grains in, or entering, reproduction. Drought conditions worsened in southern Morocco.

6 - MIDDLE EAST AND TURKEY

An active weather pattern across eastern Turkey further improved local wheat prospects and summer irrigation potential along the Tigris and Euphrates river systems. Light precipitation stabilized wheat conditions in Anatolia, but unseasonable warmth and dryness persisted in primary Iranian wheat areas.

7 - SOUTH ASIA

In March, sparse rainfall and above-normal temperatures in the main winter grain and oilseed areas reduced moisture available to immature, rainfed crops.

8 - EASTERN ASIA

In early March, seasonably warmer weather caused winter wheat to break dormancy in the North China Plain. Below-normal March rainfall reduced topsoil moisture for developing winter crops across the region. However, adequate irrigation supplies exist due to above-normal winter precipitation. Slightly below-normal March rainfall prevailed across the Yangtze Valley. Across southern China, near- to above-normal rainfall increased moisture supplies for early rice transplanting and sugarcane.

9 - SOUTHEAST ASIA

In March, unseasonably wet weather prevailed throughout Indochina. Above-normal rainfall continued to cause flooding in the Philippines. Java, Indonesia received near-normal rainfall, aiding moisture supplies for main-season rice. Above-normal rainfall benefited oil palm in peninsular Malaysia.

10 - AUSTRALIA

In the east, heavy rain in early March raised quality concerns for cotton and other maturing summer crops. A subsequent drying trend has improved quality prospects.

11 - SOUTH AFRICA

Rainy weather since mid-March boosted moisture levels for late-planted corn and other summer crops and improved wheat planting prospects.